

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. - 4. (canceled).

5. (currently amended): A halftone phase shift mask blank used as a material for manufacturing a halftone phase shift mask comprising:

a substrate,

a light-semitransmissive film having a required transmittance and phase shift amount and containing a metal, silicon and nitrogen and formed on said substrate, and

an ammonium ion production preventing layer for preventing production of ammonium ions, which is ~~an oxide of said light-semitransmissive film~~, formed at with an oxidation of a surface portion of said light-semitransmissive film so as to contain a metal, silicon, nitrogen and oxygen and which is exposed on the surface of said mask after said mask is manufactured,

said ammonium ion production preventing layer being less in nitrogen content relative to said light-semitransmissive film other than the surface portion.

6. - 8. (cancelled).

9. (currently amended): A halftone phase shift mask comprising:

a substrate, ~~and~~

a light-semitransmissive film having a required transmittance and phase shift amount and containing a metal, silicon and nitrogen, and formed on said substrate, and

an ammonium ion production preventing layer for preventing production of ammonium ions, which is ~~an oxide of said light-semitransmissive film~~, formed at with an oxidation of a surface portion of said light-semitransmissive film so as to contain a metal, silicon, nitrogen and oxygen and which is exposed on the surface of said mask after said mask is manufactured,

said ammonium ion production preventing layer being less in nitrogen content relative to said light-semitransmissive film other than the surface portion.

said light-semitransmissive film and said ammonium ion production preventing layer being provided with a predetermined pattern.

10. - 16. (canceled).

17. (previously presented): A halftone phase shift mask blank according to claim 5, wherein:

said ammonium ion production preventing layer has film thickness thinner than said light-semitransmissive film.

18. cancelled.

19. (previously presented): A halftone phase shift mask blank according to claim 5, wherein:

said ammonium ion production preventing layer has a chemically stable state in film structure relative to said light-semitransmissive film.

20. cancelled.

21. (previously presented): A halftone phase shift mask blank according to claim 5, wherein:

said light-semitransmissive film contains molybdenum as said metal.

22. (original): A halftone phase shift mask blank according to claim 5, wherein:

a concentration of said ammonium ion is 20nq/cm² or less.

23. (original): A halftone phase shift mask blank according to claim 5, wherein:

an exposure light source to the lithography mask is a KrF excimer laser or an ArF excimer laser.

24. - 31 cancelled.

32. (previously presented): A halftone phase shift mask blank used as a material for manufacturing a halftone phase shift mask comprising:

a substrate,

a light-semitransmissive film having a required transmittance and phase shift amount and containing molybdenum, silicon and nitrogen and formed on said substrate, and

an ammonium ion production preventing layer for preventing production of ammonium ions, which is formed on said light-semitransmissive film and which is exposed on the surface of said mask after said mask is manufactured,

said ammonium ion production preventing layer containing at least silicon and oxygen and being less in nitrogen content relative to said light-semitransmissive film.

33. (new): A halftone phase shift mask blank according to claim 32, wherein:

a thickness of said ammonium ion production preventing layers is 100 angstroms or less.

34. (new): A halftone phase shift mask blank according to claim 32, wherein:

said ammonium ion production preventing layer further contains molybdenum and a thickness of said ammonium ion production preventing layers is 100 angstroms or less.